

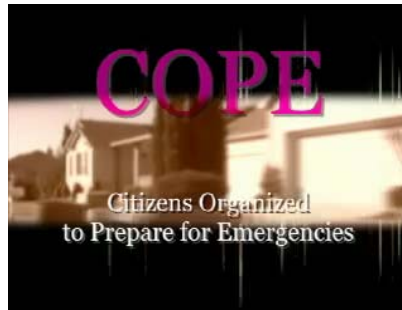
City of Santa Rosa
COPE (Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies)

Facing substantial risk from wild land fires and earthquakes, the residents of Oakmont in east Santa Rosa, led by Sue Hattendorf and Al Thomas, began to train neighbors to prepare for the aftermath of a large scale emergency. Hattendorf developed the “Seven Steps to Developing Your **COPE** Neighborhood Team” The program requires that each neighborhood select a leader and two co-leaders. Each household in the neighborhood fills out a **COPE** “Census” form that identifies anyone considered to be potentially “vulnerable” such as the elderly, those with health ailments and physical disabilities, and single mothers with young children. The form also identifies people with skills and abilities such as retired doctors, nurses, veterinarians, and former military. Those with equipment that might prove useful in a post emergency environment like generators, chain saws, power tools, and large gas grills are also identified.

COPE encourages families to get training in First Aid, CPR, CERT (Community Emergency Response Teams), and the use of fire extinguishers among other things. Neighborhoods often find that they have people capable of teaching some of those skills to their **COPE** team members. They also encourage each other to develop Emergency Preparedness Kits and do non-structural mitigation to secure items that could fall and injure people in an earthquake. The goal is to become a “temporary first responder” to your neighbors knowing that local Fire and EMS personnel will be overwhelmed with many emergencies during a large event. Each neighborhood develops a block plan diagram with household information and the “meeting spot” where everyone will gather after an emergency to take a “head count” and organize teams to check on those neighbors who did not report.

The current **COPE** Program was organized in 2003 and now has 200 neighborhood leaders in the Oakmont community who have organized about 70% of the 2800 households in their homeowners association. Throughout the rest of the City of Santa Rosa, we now have over 230 additional trained and organized **COPE** Leaders. Each leader is responsible for at least ten households in their neighborhood. Santa Rosa now has just over 4,300 households involved in the **COPE** Program. That is just over 6% of total households!

One of the best features of **COPE** is that it encourages neighbors to have **FUN** and throw “**preparedness parties**” as they organize together. **COPE** participants are famous for holding tailgate and grilling parties as well as pot lucks, and even “wine & cheese” events throughout Wine Country to encourage neighbors to come and be a part of the preparedness efforts.



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In addition to helping each other in their neighborhoods, **COPE** Participants have worked with the city to develop a **Damage Assessment and reporting system** that will use Amateur Radio **COPE** Communicators to collect and send damage reports from each district Fire Station to the City Emergency Operations Center. Once neighbors and leaders have assessed their problems and stabilized, they make plans to check on nearby facilities such as **nursing homes and schools** and help them with **response and recovery**.

COPE Volunteers will also be able to help the city with water and food distribution and other tasks to aid in community recovery. The City Emergency Preparedness Coordinator is working with the North Bay Regional Center, Living Independent, the Earle Baum Center of the Blind, and others to encourage the senior and special needs community to become **COPE** Leaders and get involved with their neighbors to prepare for emergencies. The Boy Scouts and other youth groups are also being involved in helping teach others about **COPE**.

A grant funded **COPE** Video and PowerPoint has been produced and is available on the city web page. Several Emergency Preparedness Fairs have been held in the city to promote the program and recruit new leaders. Santa Rosa is looking to become the most prepared city in California in the next few years.



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